

Amendments to the Claims:

Please cancel claims 2, 4, 9, 11, and 12-19 without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Please add new claims 20 to 37 as follows.

This Listing of Claims will replace prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (original) An image processor for generating and outputting a combined image including a latent image unperceivable by the human eye and a patterned image in the background allowing the latent image to appear clearly on a recording medium when data recorded on a recording medium is copied onto another recording medium, the image processor comprising:

digital watermark embedding means for embedding digital watermark data in text and/or image data combined with the patterned image to produce the combined image.

2. (cancelled)

3. (original) An image processor comprising:

inputting means for inputting and reading a combined image including a latent image unperceivable by the human eye, a patterned image in the background allowing the latent image to appear clearly on a recording medium when data

recorded on a recording medium is copied onto another recording medium, and text and/or image data embedded with a digital watermark;

extracting means for extracting the text and/or image data from the combined image and extracting the digital watermark from the extracted text and/or image data;

inputting means for inputting a permission code for copying image data composed of a combination of patterned image and the extracted text and/or image data onto a recording medium; and

copy regulation means for regulating the copying based on the extracted digital watermark and the permission code.

4. (cancelled)

5. (original) An image processor according to claim 3, wherein the copying regulation means regulates the copying of the combined image onto a recording medium when the extracted digital watermark indicates that copying of the combined image is permitted.

6. (original) An image processor according to claim 3, wherein the copying regulation means regulates the copying of part of the combined image onto a recording medium when the extracted digital watermark indicates that copying of part of the combined image is permitted.

7. (original) An image processor according to claim 3 wherein the copying regulation means prohibits or stops the operation of the copying of the combined image onto a recording medium when the extracted digital watermark indicates that copying of the combined image is prohibited.

8. (original) A method for image processing for generating and outputting a combined image that includes a latent image unperceivable by the human eye and a patterned image in the background allowing the latent image to appear clearly on a recording medium when data recorded on a recording medium is copied onto another recording medium, the method comprising:

a step of embedding a digital watermark into text and/or image combined with the patterned image;

wherein combining the digitally watermarked text and/or image data and the patterned image produces the combined image.

9. (cancelled)

10. (original) A method for image processing comprising:

an inputting step for inputting and reading a combined image, including a latent image unperceivable by the human eye, a patterned image in the background allowing the latent image to appear clearly on a recording medium when data recorded on a recording medium is copied onto another recording medium, and text and/or image data embedded with a digital watermark;

an extracting step for extracting the text and/or image data from the combined image and extracting the digital watermark from the extracted text and/or image data;

an inputting step for inputting a permission code for copying image data composed of a combination of a patterned image and the extracted text and/or image data onto a recording medium; and

a copy regulating step for regulating the copying based on the extracted digital watermark and the permission code.

11. (cancelled)

12. (cancelled)

13. (cancelled)

14. (cancelled)

15. (cancelled)

16. (cancelled)

17. (cancelled)

18. (cancelled)

19. (cancelled)

20. (new) An image processor comprising:

digital watermark embedding means for embedding digital watermark data in text and/or image data; and

combining means for combining the text and/or image data in which the digital watermark data is embedded by the digital watermark embedding means and patterned image data.

21. (new) An image processor according to claim 20, wherein the digital watermark embedding means embeds the digital watermark data in the text by controlling the character spacing in the text.

22. (new) An image processor according to claim 20, wherein the digital watermark embedding means embeds the digital watermark data in the text by rotating characters in the text.

23. (new) An image processor according to claim 20 further comprising:

receiving means for receiving a permission code to permit copying combined data combined by the combining means;

wherein the digital watermark data is data regarding the permission code to permit copying the combined data received by the receiving means.

24. (new) An image processor comprising:

inputting means for reading combined data including text and/or image data in which a digital watermark is embedded and patterned image data;

separating means for separating the combined data inputted by the inputting means into the text and/or image data and the patterned image data;

extracting means for extracting the digital watermark from the text and/or image data obtained as a result of the separating means separating the combined data ; and

control means for controlling output of the text and/or image data obtained as a result of the separating means separating the combined data according to the digital watermark extracted by the extracting means.

25. (new) An image processor according to claim 24, wherein the control means controls the output of the text and/or image data obtained as a result of the separating means separating the combined data according to permission determination information inputted by a user and the digital watermark extracted by the extracting means.

26. (new) An image processor according to claim 25,

wherein the digital watermark includes a permission code to control the output of the text and/or image data obtained as a result of the separating means separating the combined data; and

wherein the control means controls the output of the text and/or image data obtained as a result of the separating means separating the combined data according to whether the permission code and the permission determination information match each other.

27. (new) An image processor according to claim 24, the control means further comprising:

determining means for determining whether to output the text and/or image data obtained as a result of the separating means separating the combined data according to the digital watermark extracted by the extracting means; and

second control means for controlling the output of the combined data including the patterned image data and the text and/or image data obtained as a result of the separating means separating the combined data in the case the determining means determines to output the text and/or image data obtained as a result of the separating means separating the combined data.

28. (new) An image processing method comprising:

a digital watermark embedding step for embedding digital watermark data in text and/or image data; and

a combining step for combining the text and/or image data in which the digital watermark is embedded by the digital watermark embedding step and patterned image data.

29. (new) An image processing method according to claim 28, wherein the digital watermark embedding step embeds the digital watermark data in the text by controlling the character spacing in the text.

30 (new) An image processing method according to claim 28, wherein the digital watermark embedding step embeds the digital watermark data in the text by rotating characters in the text.

31. (new) An image processing method according to claim 28 further comprising:

a receiving step for receiving a permission code to permit copying combined data combined in the combining step;

wherein the digital watermark data is data regarding the permission code to permit copying the combined data received by the receiving step.

32. (new) An image processing method comprising:

an inputting step for reading combined data including text and/or image data in which a digital watermark is embedded and patterned image data;

a separating step for separating the combined data inputted by the inputting step into the text and/or image data and the patterned image data;

an extracting step for extracting the digital watermark from the text and/or image data obtained as a result of the separating step separating the combined data; and

a control step for controlling output of the text and/or image data obtained as a result of the separating step separating the combined data according to the digital watermark extracted in the extracting step.

33. (new) An image processing method according to claim 32, wherein the control step controls the output of the text and/or image data obtained as result of the separating step separating the combined data according to permission determination information inputted by a user and the digital watermark extracted by the extracting step.

34. (new) An image processing method according to claim 33,

wherein the digital watermark includes a permission code to control the output of the text and/or image data obtained as a result of the separating step separating the combined data; and

wherein the control step controls the output of the text and/or image data obtained as a result of the separating step separating the combined data according to whether the permission code and the permission determination information match each other.

35. (new) An image processing method according to claim 32, wherein the control step further comprises:

a determining step for determining whether to output the text and/or image data obtained as a result of the separating step separating the combined data according to the digital watermark extracted in the extracting step; and

a second control step for controlling the output of the combined data including the patterned image data and the text and/or image data obtained

as a result of the separating step separating the combined data in a case the determining step determines to output the text and/or image data obtained as a result of the separating step separating the combined data.

36. (new) Computer-executable process steps for executing the method of Claim 28.

37. (new) Computer-readable storage medium storing the computer-executable process steps of Claim 36.